

Good News for World Conservation: Dr Martin W. Holdgate Accepts Administrative Headship of IUCN

Dr Martin Wyatt Holdgate has been appointed the next Director-General of The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), the world's foremost scientific conservation organization, to which he will bring the benefits of scientific expertise and high-level administrative experience drawn from more than 25 years of active participation in British and international environmental affairs. A field biologist by training, Dr Holdgate has also participated widely in the preparation of conservation legislation and has held several influential UK Government positions. Currently, he is the Chief Environment Scientist and Deputy Secretary (Environment Protection) of the UK Department of the Environment. Prior to 1981, he was Director-General of Research within the same Department.

A graduate of Cambridge University with a doctorate in insect physiology, Dr Holdgate, 56, has been involved in field research in Antarctica, South America, and the remote islands of the South Atlantic Ocean. His continuing interest in Antarctica, and his contributions to conservation legislation for that region, have been paralleled by his work in the 1970s on environmental pollution—particularly marine pollution. On the international scene, he has also been closely associated with the United Nations Environment Programme since its inception in 1974, and was President of the UNEP Governing Council during 1983–84.

Practically from its foundation in 1948*, when it was the only international body caring for such interests globally, IUCN has been the world's leading international conservation federation. Over 500 members of the Swiss-based organization include Governments, Government agencies, and nongovernmental organizations and groups in most countries of the world. It harnesses the expertise of ecolog-

ists and conservationists to collect and evaluate knowledge of our ever-changing planet, and to advise on how species of wildlife—plant as well as animal—and their habitats can be protected within the strategies for sustainable development that are essential for the human future. Its work has practical expression in the establishment and management of national parks and Nature reserves, in the saving of threatened plants and animals and their habitats, and in numerous other ways in which it has long been the world leader.

Speaking of his new appointment, Dr Holdgate said:

'The need for action to conserve our planet has never been greater. Among our five [thousand million] fellow human beings there are far too many who live in squalor and without hope. To give them hope, we need development that can be sustained—and this means caring for the soils, airs, waters, and life of the Earth on which we all depend. IUCN is uniquely placed to harness ecological knowledge and provide plans that will help Governments and international agencies to bring people into balance with their environment in a world that is still beautiful and rich in wildlife. I look forward to this challenge immensely.'

Dr Holdgate will take up his appointment in April 1988, following the General Assembly of IUCN to be held in San José, Costa Rica, 1–10 February. The current Director-General of IUCN, Dr Kenton R. Miller, will work closely with Dr Holdgate through this period of transition and before returning to his native United States to continue his career in the conservation and management of natural resources.

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* originally as IUPN, the International Union for Protection of Nature, of which your Editor was an early member.—Ed.

UNEP's 1988 'Global 500'

A year ago the United Nations Environment Programme began a series of awards for environmental achievement—its tributes to successes on the front lines of the global cause of the environment. This roll of honour was called the 'Global 500' because, like the environment, its scope is global and over the years 1987–91 UNEP will make a total of 500 such awards.*

In 1987 there were 90 awards—in the form of simple certificates—to individuals and organizations in 43 countries. UNEP subsequently invited nominations for the 'Global 500' awards of 1988.

They will again recognize practical work in protecting, improving, and sustaining, our planet's natural resource-base. For the 1987 awards there were 450 nominations from 70 countries, presenting the UNEP selection panel with a difficult task in choosing the first 'Global 500' laureates from a great variety of outstanding environmental achievements. UNEP will announce the second group of awards on June 5, World Environment Day, 1988. Nominations should have reached its Nairobi headquarters (P.O. Box 30552, Nairobi, Kenya) by no later than February 15.

Nomination forms and criteria details are available from Nairobi.

A UNEP statement says: The 'Global 500' programme made a successful start in 1987, attracting wide public, media, and political, support and stimulating official actions. We welcome help in continuing this success in 1988.

'The dedication of those who work to preserve and enhance the environment, the life-support system of our planet, deserves the gratitude and encouragement of the world. They do not seek reward or recognition, but UNEP hopes that, by drawing attention to their achievements, others will be encouraged to follow their example of service to the environment.

'Everywhere that service is growing—which means that many individuals or groups merit nomination for a 'Global 500' award. Already nominations for 1988 are reaching us from all over the world as a result of the media coverage of the 1987 awards.'

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* See John Shaw's account in our Summer issue (*Environmental Conservation*, 14(3), p. 179, 1987.—Ed.